

Recognizing The Meta-Function Of News Item

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ABSTRACT

Language is a means of communication which has two main systems, i.e. system of form and meaning. The meanings realized by language are textual and contextual meaning. Therefore, language cannot be separated from its context of use. This study investigates how context of situation influences the use of language, more specifically, in the perspective of language meta-function concept. The language that is used in news items, like daily newspaper also has certain characteristic which is influenced by the author (the writer) and the socio-political situation of the society. The objective of the research is to describe how ideational meaning is realized in the Jakarta Post headline news on the fuel increasing issue. The research is a text analysis by using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory which cover (1) the classification imbedded in the phase sequences, (2) the sequences of events in the phases, (3) The sequences of events of the Jakarta Post Headline News on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012, which are specifically concerned with the process and (4) how people and thing are attributed in the text.

Key words: *meta-function, systemic functional linguistic, ideational meanings, sequences of meaning, sequences of events*

ABSTRAK

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INTRODUCTION

People use language to negotiate meaning which is influenced by the situation in their daily life. It also applies to the writer (author) of newspaper when writing any segments of texts like headline news. It can be perceived that the writer writes the news item by representing the functions of language in daily life. In this perspective, language is structured to make three kinds of meanings simultaneously, i.e. experiential or ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The discussion of language in contextual use has been concerned in the study of language meta-function. This study explores how context of situation influences the use of language. The context of situation in this case refers to what is addressed in discourse study known as *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. The study focuses on the how *field* is represented in a text of news items. *Field* refers to what is happening or type of action in its social nature. Field is the representation of social activity including subject matter which reflects the ideational/ experiential meta-function. That ideational or experiential function of the clause is the clause functions which represent our experience of the world as language users⁵.

Since language is made up of two main systems, i.e. system of form and meaning, so a language should not only be considered as a set of structure of words but also a set of meaningful unit of words. People can communicate with one another only by exchanging or negotiating meanings through the use of language in the communication. Miscommunication among people will occur when they use language in communication without conveying the meanings well. People and their relationship of one another in producing texts, topic of text as well as the texture of the text can be described and perceived by understanding the meanings realized in texts. Context, including context of situation, is something necessary to consider in understanding how language is used in a daily life. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory can be a supporting concept to do an investigation on language uses in daily communication. To study how people use language in social life, systemic linguists propose three main theoretical points of view about language, those are: that language use is functional; its function is to make meanings; and

these meanings are socially and culturally driven when meanings are exchanged. In terms of semiotic process, it is called a process of making meanings².

Text can be found in many kinds of life segments. It cannot be perceived to be only a structure of meaningful words but it is much more related to any meaningful symbols people can find in communication events. News item is a kind of text which presents daily life context to a certain extent. Mass media has been used by people to understand and criticize any phenomena in their social life in certain points of view. Authors (journalists) often present interesting news which is related to the current situation to attract people to read the news. Topics of social-economy and politic have so far driven people to be concerned with such as the issue of the increasing price on fuel reported by the Jakarta Post. The headline news on the fuel increasing price issue in the Jakarta Post in April 2012 is a challenging thing to investigate by using the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Theory of SFL enables someone to know the way the writers of the news (texts) represents the functions of language in social daily life. Daily newspapers like the Jakarta Post can be an interesting media to uncover the contextual meaning brought to the readers by the author. That language is structured to make three types of meanings simultaneously (metafunctions): experiential or ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta-functions².

This study looks at how language is perceived in semantic perspective. This study tries to use the above theoretical framework (SFL), specifically by focusing on the framework of ideational meta-function to analyze the ideational meaning realized in the headline news published by the Jakarta Post daily newspaper. In a specific point of view, the study is done to investigate the ideational meaning found in the headline news of the Jakarta Post Daily newspaper which cover the following points: (1) the classification imbedded in the phase sequences, (2) the sequences of events in the phases, (3) The sequences of events of the Jakarta Post Headline News on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012, which are specifically concerned with the process and (4) how people and thing are attributed in the text. The above points are included in the study

of ideational or experiential metafunction of text. It is the study of the grammar of the clause as representation which focuses on analyzing the process represented by the text.

Discourse Analysis, Language Meta-Function, and Ideational Meaning

Studying language meta-function is always related to perspective of Discourse Analysis. The term “discourse” or “text” is often correlated to the use of language in a real life, so discourse study investigates how language use is influenced and driven by society. Who propose discourse in the frame of social discourse through clauses in the whole text¹³. It shows that discourse should be considered more than a sequence of clauses. Thereafter, discourse analysis is regarded as the study of the relationship between language and its inter-textual, social and intercultural contexts in which it is used (Fairclough (2003). When people work on discourse analysis, they should consider the dynamic development of society with its cultural complexity. Society is a controlling unit which has been proven to influence the language use.

Systemic linguists have been interested in studying how people use language to accomplish their everyday social life². Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) studies the functional and situational organization of language in the social context (Halliday, 1985:11). It is concerned with how people generate utterances and texts to convey their intended meanings through the generalized meta-functions that correlate language to the outside world where interactants and their social roles matter. At this point, systemic linguists have seen language as semantic units. The study on ideational or experiential meta-function deals with studying the process in a text to understand the predominant events or relationship between participants who get involved in the process, and how this representation gives contribution to the reader’s experience of the world². Meanwhile, interpersonal meta-function relates to communication between people, the roles they assume as they express themselves and the attitudes they express towards one another and towards their subject matter. In shorts, the discussion on interpersonal meta-function is the discussion about roles and attitudes². The study

on textual meta-function is concerned with the study on the actual organization of the text.

Communication always involves context of situation since it is a process of meaning negotiation. So, context of situation influences language use in communication. Language choice or language variety is determined by the context of situation, which is also known as register. Language variety is influenced by who, to whom, for what purpose and in what setting the language is used. In the concept of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), register is classified into three models, i.e. field, tenor and mode. The dimension concerned with relationships between interactants is called tenor. The dimension that is concerned with their social activity is called field. Meanwhile the dimension that is concerned with the role of language is called mode¹³. Therefore, field is related to what is happening or kind of action in its social nature. Field also represents social activity including subject matter which reflects the ideational/ experiential metafunction. ⁵That ideational or experiential function of the clause as “representation” which means that the clause functions to represent our experience of the world as language users. Language is used to talk about the world¹⁵. It means that language is used to vocally symbolize, either the external world, things, events, qualities, etc., or our internal world, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, etc.

That experientially, the clause construes a quantum of change as a figure, or configuration of a process, participants involved in it and any attendant circumstances. In further detail, the system allows the clause to be broken down into three components: process, participant and circumstance⁵. That process is typically expressed or realized by the verbal group in the clause, and is the central component of the message from the experiential perspective¹⁵. Participant is normally realized by a nominal group which is known as subject in interpersonal term. In some cases, however, a participant may not be explicitly mentioned but is understood as part of the experiential meaning. Circumstances are typically realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases which associate details of time, place and manner.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a qualitative research which is a text analysis by using a framework of

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory. The framework views the function of language in social context. The text analysis in the research covers the exploration of wording (grammatical structure) as a representation of social and political situation of society. The study tries to uncover the meta-function realized in news item. The meta-function of language which becomes the focus of the study is the meaning realized in the field. The study describes investigates the ideational meanings used The Jakarta Post Headline news on the fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012. The analysis focuses on finding out the sequence of meaning, sequence of events, elements within clauses and the classification, description as well as identification within the elements in the Jakarta Post Headline news on the fuel increasing issue in April 2002. In the analysis, the researcher investigates the processes in a text to find out the predominant events or relationship between participants who are involved in the process, and how this representation contributes to the reader's experience of the world. The analysis is broken down into the following activities:

- a. Analyzing the sequences of meanings of the Jakarta Post head line news on the fuel increasing issue in April 2012. Sequence of meanings can be investigated by analyzing the sequences of phase, the sequences within phases and the sequences of activities and description.
- b. Analyzing the sequences of events in the Jakarta Post head line news on the fuel increasing issue in April 2012. The sequences of events can be found out by analyzing the figures of doing, the figures of saying, the figures of sensing and the figures of being.
- c. Analyzing the elements within clauses in the Jakarta Post head line news on the fuel increasing issue in April 2012.
- d. Analyzing how people and things are classified, described and identified within the elements in the Jakarta Post head line news on the fuel increasing issue in April 2012.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, the language meta-function is descriptively found in the Jakarta Post Headline News in its ideational meanings.

It shows that the Jakarta Post Headline News on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 presents typical forms of the sequence of meaning, sequences of events, and the elements within clauses as well as the classification, description and identification of people and things within elements in the elements within clauses as stated to be the main topic to explore in this research. The four texts which have been analyzed suggest some ideas that may strengthen the perspective that the wordings produced in text are significantly influenced by the author's point of view in response to any situations which happen in a real social life. The word structure of the analyzed texts have proposed certain meanings influenced by the context of situation, in this case, a sociopolitical situation concerning the issue of the rise on fuel price. The analysis shows that the sequences of phases of the Jakarta Post headline news on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 are the sequences of what they are about each phase. The sequences can be classified into facts, comments, and quotations. The classification is not only done based on the meanings of the text but also the point of view of who the author is, and what purposes or goals embedded in sequences are.

The sequences within phases of the Jakarta Post headline news on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 which are the sequences of what happen (events) in the phase, mostly consist of some events. The sequences are also dependent on what the author (journalist) found during collecting information and how important could it be shared to public since daily news should be reported to public in reference to the current issue of what happen in society. The sequences of activities of the Jakarta Post headline news on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 are the sequences of activities which describe what the participants do are realized by process of doing. Meanwhile, the descriptions of people and things of the Jakarta Post headline news on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 which covers the description of quality and identity of the participants are realized by process of being and sometime in nominal group. The sequences of events of the Jakarta Post Headline News on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 are specifically reflected in the process, whose core of elements are participants, process, and

circumstances. The analyzed texts perform some events embedded in the figures of doing, figures of being, figures of saying and figures of sensing.

The sequences of event are realized by the author in 228 figures of doing, 48 figures of saying, 33 figures of sensing and 30 figures of being. The figures of doing have been found to be the mostly used figures by the author of the analyzed texts. As it has been informed that the ideation of the text as a clause cover three kinds of elements, i.e. participant, process and circumstance which are the basic unit of ideational meaning in discourse. The analysis has found many processes in "the Jakarta Post" headline news on the fuel prices raising issue in April 2012. The process of saying is mostly found in quotations written by the author. Concerning the circumstances, the text has shown the use of circumstance of purpose. The analysis finds that the fields found in the fuel prices raising issue in April 2012 are concerned with the conflict between the government and the house of representative about the state budget and the problem between gas producers and their consumers. A text usually presents a classification which can be applied to the classifications of people and things are categorical distinctions. The research finds 11 classifications of people and things which serve as quality and qualifier. The identity of people and things can be tracked from the parts. The research found three ways to express a part-whole relation, i.e. possessive, facet and location. The research finds 14 part identification in the analyzed text. It is then clearly seen that the aspects of classification, description, and identification are engaged by the author of the texts in expanding the meaning of people and things.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The analysis shows that the classification imbedded in the phase sequences of the Jakarta Post headline news on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012 are facts, comments, and quotations. The sequences of events in the phases are found to be influenced by the collected information, covered by the author, which is used to support the idea for public consumption. The news item contains some events which are related to socio, political and economical situation in Indonesia especially

concerning the issue of fuel price rising. The sequences of events of the Jakarta Post Headline News on fuel price-increasing issue in April 2012, which are specifically concerned with the process is found to be realized in 228 figures of doing, 48 figures of saying, 33 figures of sensing, and 30 figures of being. It is found that in expanding the meaning attributed to people and things, the author of the news item texts applies classification to express categorical distinctions, description to express quality and qualifier, and identification to express possessive relation, facet and measure.

English students need to understand that language cannot be separated from society since language is a means of communication which is used by people to negotiate meaning. Therefore, the concept of Systemic Functional Linguistic is important to learn because it has an overview about functional language. Lecturer is suggested to make the English students aware about the important of understanding the concept of text and its practical use. News item is a real and factual sample of text which can be used by lecturer as a media of teaching. The research can be further developed into the other analysis on language meta-function. Researcher can keep in pace with the development of language use in society by analyzing actively the dynamic development of social, political and economical condition by considering what is published in newspaper and other kinds of news item.

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